



Report to the Legislature: *Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities*

Line-item 7061-9600
April 2009



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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April 2009

Dear Members of the General Court:

I am pleased to submit this *Report to the Legislature: Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities* pursuant to Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008, line item 7061-9600 which specifies:

“a discretionary grant pilot program with the purpose of providing monies to school districts and state public institutions of higher education partnering together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with disabilities as defined in section 1 of chapter 71B of the General Law ages 18-22; provided, that the grant program will be limited to said students who are considered to have severe disabilities and have been unable to achieve the competency determination necessary to pass the Massachusetts comprehensive assessment system (MCAS) exam; provided further, that said students with disabilities shall be offered enrollment in credit and noncredit courses that include nondisabled students, including enrollment in noncredit courses and credit bearing courses in audit status for students who may not meet course prerequisites and requirements...”

The Inclusive Enrollment Grant (ICE) Program spans much of the Commonwealth, from Western Massachusetts to Boston, and serves students from urban, suburban, and rural areas. Given students' individual needs, specific disabilities, the distance between students' home and the higher education institution, and other characteristics, the services extended to students vary. For example, some ICE students are taught to use public transportation as part of the program, while others require specialized transportation services. In light of these variations, the ICE program was purposely designed to be flexible so that each partnership could develop in ways to meet the unique needs of the students participating in the program and the communities where they live.

An inclusive post-secondary educational experience for students with severe disabilities requires extensive student support for academic and social success. Partnerships provide access to a range of credit and non-credit courses and support services to students. Services are also made available to faculty in incorporating and instructing students with severe disabilities in the college courses. All of the ICE programs use student support services already found on the college campus (e.g., testing accommodations, assistive technology, interpreter services, readers, scribes, proctors, academic advising, note taking services, textbooks on CD). More extensive individualized services than what the campus can traditionally provide are also required. Most students are paired with educational coaches who assist them academically and socially. Educational coaches are either high school or college staff, depending on the design of the partnership.

Six higher education/public school district partnerships are participating in the third year (FY09) of the ICE program. The partnerships include seven community colleges, one state university and 26 public school districts. In the fall of 2008, 64 students with severe disabilities enrolled in 78 courses. In the spring of 2009, it is projected that 79 students will enroll in 83 courses. During FY09, 96 students (unduplicated count) with severe disabilities are projected to participate in the ICE program. The grant period began September 1, 2008 and will end on August 31, 2009.

As part of the grant program, the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education and Higher Education are collaborating with the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMass Boston to produce a DVD for technical assistance, outreach, and advocacy.

Now that this pilot grant program is in its third year, partnerships will begin to discuss locating alternative funding sources that may help sustain the program in the future.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact me or Associate Commissioner Carole Thomson at 781-338-6201.

Sincerely,

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Introduction

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, in consultation with the Department of Higher Education, is pleased to submit this *Report to the Legislature: Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Partnership Programs for Students with Disabilities* pursuant to Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008, line item 7061-9600 which specifies:

“a discretionary grant pilot program with the purpose of providing monies to school districts and state public institutions of higher education partnering together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with disabilities as defined in section 1 of chapter 71B of the General Law ages 18-22; provided, that the grant program will be limited to said students who are considered to have severe disabilities and have been unable to achieve the competency determination necessary to pass the Massachusetts comprehensive assessment system (MCAS) exam; provided further, that said students with disabilities shall be offered enrollment in credit and noncredit courses that include nondisabled students, including enrollment in noncredit courses and credit bearing courses in audit status for students who may not meet course prerequisites and requirements, and that the partnering school districts will provide supports, services and accommodations necessary to facilitate a student’s enrollment...that the department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the department of higher education, shall report to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education and the joint committee on higher education on said discretionary grant program not later than February 16, 2009...”

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE), the lead agency, receives grant funds directly and is responsible for the coordination of the grant activities including submitting all required reports. The Department of Higher Education (DHE) provides an advisory function to ESE, partner campuses, and other stakeholders on such matters as academic quality, enrollment issues, and higher education policies, and works to expand the capacity of the institutions of higher education to enroll students. The DHE also shares in decision making with ESE.

In FY07, when the funds were first allocated for this pilot grant program, the ESE and the DHE developed guidelines. The guidelines provided a framework for the programs and included priorities, student recruitment and selection procedures, and a list of key roles/job functions considered necessary to implement a successful inclusive concurrent enrollment program for students with severe disabilities. At that time, much effort was put into establishing common goals, procedures, and vocabulary for the grant program.

Partnership Design

The Inclusive Enrollment Grant (ICE) Program spans much of the Commonwealth, from Western Massachusetts to Boston, and serves students from urban, suburban, and rural areas. Given students’ individual needs, specific disabilities, the distance between students’ home and the higher education institution, and other characteristics, the services extended to students vary. For example, some ICE students are taught to use public transportation as part of the program, while others require individualized transportation services. In light of these variations, the guidelines for the ICE program were purposely designed to be flexible so that each partnership could develop in ways to meet the unique needs of the students participating in the program and the communities where they live.

An inclusive post-secondary educational experience for students with severe disabilities requires extensive student support for academic and social success. Partnerships provide access to a range of credit and non-credit courses and support services to students. Services are made available to faculty in incorporating and instructing students with severe disabilities in the college courses. All of the ICE programs use student support services already found on the college campus (e.g., testing accommodations, assistive technology, interpreter services, readers, scribes, proctors, academic advising, note taking services, textbooks on CD). Often, more extensive individualized services than the campus can traditionally provide are required. Most students are paired with educational coaches who assist them academically and socially. Educational coaches are either high school or college staff, depending on the design of the partnership.

Partnership Outcomes

Over the three years of this grant program, the strength of the partnerships has grown markedly. During the first two years, partnerships invested considerable time and energy into establishing a foundation for future success. This included establishing clear lines of communication between colleges and high schools, developing a framework for student participation in college courses and campus life, and determining the appropriate supports for students and faculty to ensure success. In the early stages, partnerships worked to make connections between transition planning, college coursework, and the career goals of students. Although students often participated in courses that provided a focus on social and recreational skills and gave students the opportunity to participate in the life of the college, there was sometimes limited connection between the interests of the student, the college course selection, and future employment goals. In FY09, there has been considerable growth in this area. An increasing number of students are participating in credit bearing courses, the range of courses available to students has increased significantly, and course selection is more closely tied to student transition planning and future career opportunities.

Because anecdotal evidence has shown that students benefit academically and transition to young adulthood more readily when using the entire college experience as the classroom, (e.g., social networks, campus events, transportation to and from campus, course-related activities), inclusive opportunities in the life at the college are integral to the ICE program. ICE students join their peers not only in courses, but also in the cafeteria and athletic centers, and they participate in student clubs, theater performances, art shows, volunteer work groups, and other typical campus activities. Many of the ICE students—up to 80% of some partnerships — gain work skills by participating in integrated employment opportunities.

A liaison from the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), UMASS/Boston works with each partnership in cooperation with staff from ESE and DHE to provide technical assistance to the partnerships.

A total of \$1,308,000 in grant funds was awarded to partnerships in FY09 (the grant period began September 1, 2008 and will end on August 31, 2009). The partnership awards range from \$200,000 to \$227,000. Grant funds are used to pay for stipends/salaries and fringe benefits for project personnel; textbooks, materials, and other associated costs to support the student coursework and participation on the college campus; tuition/fees for students; student transportation costs; consultants (e.g., parent consultants and youth leaders); assistive technology (the necessary technology to ensure full access to the curriculum); mentoring and technical assistance to support the development and implementation of the proposed model;

training supplies; and in-state travel costs. Stipends and salaries for project personnel is one of the largest areas of cost – over 40% of grant funds are budgeted for these purposes. Transportation costs are another significant area, particularly for partnerships that serve a wide geographic distribution of districts. Across all partnerships, transportation costs are projected to be approximately 11% of total expenditures. Tuition and fees are projected to be approximately 7% of the total funds expended.

FY09 Enrollment and Partnerships

Six higher education/public school district partnerships are participating in the third year (FY09) of the ICE program. The partnerships include seven community colleges, one state university, and 26 public school districts. In the fall of 2008, 64 students with severe disabilities enrolled in 78 courses. In the spring of 2009, it is projected that 79 students will enroll in 83 courses. During FY09, 96 students (unduplicated count) with severe disabilities are projected to participate in the ICE program. The FY09 grant period began September 1, 2008 and will end on August 31, 2009.

The FY09 partnerships are as follows:

- **Bristol Community College** – lead agency for the partnership
 - Fall River Public Schools
 - Old Rochester Public Schools
 - Somerset Public Schools
 - Seekonk Public Schools
 - Taunton Public Schools
- **Holyoke Community College** - lead agency for the partnership
 - Agawam Public Schools/Willie Ross School for the Deaf
 - Belchertown Public Schools
 - Monson Public Schools
 - Springfield Public Schools/Willie Ross School for the Deaf
 - South Hadley Public Schools
 - Ware Public Schools
 - Westfield Public Schools
- **MassBay Community College** – co-lead agency for the partnership
 - Newton Public Schools – co-lead agency for the partnership
 - Boston Public Schools
 - Needham Public Schools
- **Mount Wachusett Community College** – lead agency for the partnership
 - Ashburnham-Westminster Regional Public Schools
 - Fitchburg Public Schools
 - Gardner Public Schools
 - Leominster Public Schools,
 - Narragansett Public Schools
 - Ralph C. Mahar Regional Public Schools

- **Quinsigamond Community College** - lead agency for the partnership
 - Berlin-Boylston Public Schools
 - Leicester Public Schools
 - Millbury Public Schools
 - West Boylston Public Schools
 - Worcester Public Schools
- **UMASS/Boston** - lead agency for the partnership
 - Bunker Hill Community College
 - Roxbury Community College
 - Boston Public Schools
 - Quincy Public Schools

Student Outcomes

Fall 2008 and Spring 2009

Based on the mid-year reports submitted by the partnerships, during the fall 64 students were enrolled in 78 credit and non-credit bearing courses. Of the 78 courses, 4 courses were non-credit, 47 courses were taken for credit, and 27 courses were audited credit-bearing courses. Students successfully completed 69 courses for an 88% completion rate. Course selection includes arithmetic, career exploration, sound design for multimedia, photography, aerobics, basic drawing, a number of introductory courses both academic and interest-focused, and music and art courses. Course selection is based upon student interest and career goals developed through the planning process.

Student progress toward career and life goals is evident when examining individual course selection over time. Many students are engaged in multiple semester enrollments in a specific course of study and have been able to connect with work experiences as part of the grant program.

Case Example: Rohan

When the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment partnership at the local community college became available in January of 2007, Rohan, a 19 year old with Down Syndrome, was identified by his school district as a participant. At the time, Rohan was still forming his vision of what he wanted to do when he completed secondary school at age 22.

Rohan initially enrolled in the community college's Introduction to Computer Course. He audited the course in his first semester with support from the educational coach provided through the Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment program. The educational coach helped Rohan understand, organize, and keep up with his course work, adapt materials, learn to navigate the college campus, participate in campus activities, and make friends on campus. At the same time, extensive training and technical assistance and support were provided to faculty and administrators of the community college, as well as high school personnel.

As part of the ICE initiative, a person centered planning session was conducted with Rohan to support him in taking the lead in his life and in identifying career goals. Auditing the computer course gave him enough experience to decide he wanted to pursue working in an office and enroll in additional computer courses. The instructor of the introductory computer class encouraged him to take the course again, but for credit, again with the supports and accommodations provided by the educational coach.

As part of ICE, Rohan not only took courses but also became a valued member of the college community. He took full advantage of many of the extra-curricular options such as salsa dancing lessons, working out at the fitness center, and attending guest speaker lectures. Rohan's educational coach assisted him in being successful in all these activities, providing the supports and accommodations necessary to participate in the student life of the campus. Simultaneously, ICE program staff from the high school and community college provided instruction and support so that Rohan could learn the skills necessary to take public transportation independently to the college.

Rohan's success at the community college significantly raised the expectations of everyone in his life. As part of the program, his parents, school district personnel, and college personnel worked collaboratively to identify a paid internship related to his course work. Rohan began working with a job coach in a paid internship at the public relations office in a local university.

By the fall of 2008, Rohan could independently take public transportation to the college campus and to his work. His paid internship moved to paid employment three days a week, with decreased assistance from the job coach. Rohan's goal for the future was to work full-time when he exited special education.

Rohan has finished school and is working full time in the public relations office. His self-esteem has soared as he has become a contributing and valued member of his community.

Further Activities for FY09

Now that this pilot grant program is in its third year, partnerships will begin to discuss locating alternative funding sources that will sustain the program in the future. This will include reviewing some of the high cost services such as transportation, educational coaches, and other supports needed for students with severe disabilities.

This year 9C budget reductions of \$215,000 in October, and \$54,000 in January affected the program by reducing funds available for technical assistance provided by ESE as well as cuts to campus programs. No expansion to new college campus partnerships was undertaken.

Another activity is the Institute for Community Inclusion's work in collaboration with ESE, DHE and the partnership higher education institutions, and high schools to develop a DVD to be used for the purpose of technical assistance, outreach and advocacy. The DVD is expected to be completed this spring.

Planned Activities for FY10

During the fourth year of the grant program, partnerships will be asked to discuss ways to incorporate the ICE program into the work of the college and the high school and to find alternate funds to support the services needed to include students with severe disabilities into the academic and social life a college. The ESE and DHE will continue to work with the partnerships to explore ways to share fiscal resources and personnel assigned to ICE and to work with external partners, including other state agencies, to take advantage of additional services available to individuals with severe disabilities.

Appendix A

Chapter 182 of the Acts of 2008

Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment Programs for Student with Disabilities reads as follows:

7061-9600 For a discretionary grant pilot program with the purpose of providing monies to school districts and state public institutions of higher education partnering together to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment programs for students with disabilities as defined in section 1 of chapter 71B of the General Law ages 18-22; provided, that the grant program will be limited to said students who are considered to have severe disabilities and have been unable to achieve the competency determination necessary to pass the Massachusetts comprehensive assessment system (MCAS) exam; provided further, that said students with disabilities shall be offered enrollment in credit and noncredit courses that include nondisabled students, including enrollment in noncredit courses and credit bearing courses in audit status for students who may not meet course prerequisites and requirements, and that the partnering school districts will provide supports, services and accommodations necessary to facilitate a student's enrollment; provided further, that the department, in consultation with the department of higher education shall develop guidelines to ensure that the grant program promotes civic engagement and mentoring of faculty in state institutions of higher education, and supports college success, work success, participation in student life of the college community, and provision of a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment; provided further, that not more than \$50,000 shall be distributed to the department of higher education in order to increase the capacity of public institutions of higher education to include students with severe disabilities in the concurrent enrollment pilot program including \$4,000 for production of a video to be used for provision of training and technical assistance; provided further, that not more than \$50,000 shall be allocated to the department of elementary and secondary education to provide training and technical assistance to school districts for program implementation including \$4,000 for production of said video to be used for provision of training and technical assistance; provided further, that the department of elementary and secondary education, in consultation with the department of higher education, shall report to the house and senate committees on ways and means, the joint committee on education and the joint committee on higher education on said discretionary grant program not later than February 16, 2009; and provided further, that for the purpose of this item, appropriated funds may be expended through August 31, 2009

.....\$1,575,000

Appendix B: List of Credit and Non-Credit Courses

ICE students have enrolled in the following courses for credit or non-credit during the fall and spring semesters of FY09.

Fall 2008 & Spring 2009	ICE Student is Taking the Courses for Credit or Non-Credit/Audit
Advanced Photography	3 credits
Aerobics	audit - 1 credit
Arithmetic	1 credit
Art in Modern History	audit
ASL 111 - Beginning Sign Language	3 credits
Auto Lab	audit
Auto Steering Suspensions	audit
Babysitter Certificate	non-credit
Baking Theory	3 credits
Basic Computing Skills	3 credits
Basic Drawing	3 credits
Basic Math	3 credits
Basic Still Photography	audit
Basic Word	non-credit
Beginning / Intermediate Swimming	2 credits
Beginning Yoga	audit
Career Exploration and Development	audit
Career Life Planning	3 credits
Career Planning	audit - 1 credit
Ceramics I	audit
College Success: The Meaning of Work	audit
Computer Applications	audit
Computers & Technology	audit
Critical Thinking	2 credits
Drawing 1	3 credits
Electronic Game Development	audit - 3 credits
Elementary Spanish I	3 credits
ENG 096 Intermediate Writing	3 credits
First Aid/CPR	non-credit
First Year Experience	audit - 3 credits
Foundations of Math	audit
Fundamentals of Acting	audit - 3 credits
Fundamentals of Reading	audit - 3 credits
Fundamentals of Writing	3 credits
Fundamentals of Math	audit -3 credits
Game Development Essentials	3 credits
Gym Membership	non-credit
History of Western Civilization	audit - 3 credits
HTML/Dreamweaver	3 credits
Intermediate Word	non-credit
Introduction to Business	3 credits
Introduction to Classical Music	audit - 3 credits
Introduction to Criminal Justice	3 credits
Introduction to Drawing	3 credits
Introduction to Early Childhood	audit

Education	
Introduction to Jazz	audit - credit
Introduction to Mass Media	audit - 3 credits
Introduction to Microcomputer	audit - 3 credits
Introduction to Nutrition	audit - 3 credits
Introduction to Psychology	3 credits
Introduction to Sign Language	3 credits
Introduction to Sociology	audit - 3 credits
Introduction to Theatre	3 credits
Jazz in America	3 credits
Job Search Strategies	1 credit
Keyboarding	3 credits
Learning Strategies	3 credits
Managing Stress	1 credit
Martial Arts-Okinawan	1 credit
Martial Arts -Taekwondo	1 credit
Movement for Actors	3 credits
Music Skill and Theory I	audit - 3 credits
Oral Communication	3 credits
Painting 1	3 credits
Photographing People	3 credits
Physical Conditioning	1 credit
Piano	audit - 1 credit class
Piano Keyboard	3 credits
Principles of Management	3 credits
Professional Etiquette	1 credit
Public Speaking	3 credits
Reading Efficiency	3 credits
Self-defense	1 credit
Sound Design for Multimedia	3 credits
Spanish I	audit - 3 credits
Strategy For College/ Career	credit (1 or 3 depending on course #)
Television Production	audit - 3 credits
Tools for Resistance	1 credit
Topics in Dance	1 credit
Video Field Production and Editing	3 credits
Wellness/Fitness	audit - credit
Women in Photography	audit - 3 credits
World Civilizations	audit - 3 credits